

Department of Food Safety Issue No. 308 dated October 17, 2001

Directive from Director of the Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Food Safety  
Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare  
(Partially amended on July 1, 2002)

## **Guidance for Handling Specified Risk Materials in a Slaughterhouse**

### **1. Purpose**

The detection of cattle with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (hereinafter referred to as “BSE”) in Japan has resulted in the partially amended Abattoir Law Enforcement Regulation, which has designated the head (excluding the tongue and cheek meat), the spinal cord and distal ileum of cattle as Specified Risk Materials and requires that these materials be completely removed and incinerated and that contamination of meat and by products for human consumption with Specified Risk Materials be prevented during slaughtering and dressing.

The purpose of this Guidance is to ensure the prevention of contamination of meat and by products with the Specified Risk Materials throughout the processes of slaughter and dressing.

### **2. Basic Concept of Application**

As Japan's having become a BSE infected country has necessitated major changes in, among others, the slaughter, dressing and other procedures as well as sanitation control in order to ensure the safety of Japanese beef and by products, instructions should be given to the owners, managers, slaughterers and other workers, etc., of abattoirs to ensure that such changes are fully known to them, to seek their understanding and to ensure that such changes are steadily implemented, and information should be provided to the persons concerned to obtain their cooperation.

### **3. Handling of Specified Risk Materials**

All Specified Risk Materials should be removed without contaminating the surroundings and stored in a container used exclusively for this purpose, followed by complete incineration after being checked by a meat inspector.

### **4. Destruction of Brain and Spinal Cord by Wire During Slaughter**

- (1) It is desirable that the practice of inserting wire is discontinued from a sanitary viewpoint due to the fact that it may cause leakage of brain or spinal cord tissue resulting in contamination and that effective disinfection of metal wire every time it is used in one animal is difficult to achieve.
- (2) In the event that the practice of wire insertion cannot be discontinued from the viewpoint of workers' safety, any portion of hide, meat, etc., to which the brain or spinal cord tissue adhered in the process should be removed by trimming, etc., and stored as if

Specified Risk Materials, followed by incineration after being checked by a meat inspector.

## **5. Handling of Spinal Cord**

- (1) Due to the fact that halving a carcass may cause contamination of the carcass as a result of damage to the spinal cord contained in the vertebral column and that the spinal cord adhering to the vertebrae may contaminate edible portions during dressing meat processing, it is necessary to prevent pieces of the spinal cord from being scattered at the stage of halving as well as removing the spinal cord completely from the halved carcass.
- (2) When halving a carcass, the saw should be continuously washed with water during cutting to prevent pieces of the spinal cord from being scattered, and spinal cord pieces should be collected from the washing water using a filter and stored and incinerated as if Specified Risk Materials. In addition, the saw used for halving carcasses should be thoroughly washed and disinfected every time it is used in one animal.
- (3) Following halving, the spinal cord contained in the spinal column should be meticulously removed using metallic instruments and thoroughly washed away with high-pressure water, and the resulting carcass should be checked by a meat inspector that no spinal cord pieces remain on the carcass.
- (4) As the spinal cord is a soft tissue, it is possible to make it adhere to one side in the spine by splitting the carcass along a line that is slightly off the midline. This method also causes less damage to the spinal cord.
- (5) Workers engaged in halving carcasses should wear eye protection and a mask.

## **6. Measures to be Taken upon Confirmation of BSE Positivity**

The facilities, equipment, machines and instruments that were exposed to the Specified Risk Materials should be disinfected using methods to inactivate abnormal prion proteins. In addition, other facilities, equipment, machines and instruments should be meticulously washed.

## **7. Incineration Conditions for Specified Risk Materials**

Specified Materials shall be incinerated completely at 800 °C or above.